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99-180

Sept. 7, 1999

For Immediate Release:

EIU SEEKS BELL RINGERS FOR UNITY

CHARLESTON -- Community members are invited to join the students and staff of Eastern Illinois University in a musical celebration of acceptance, tolerance and peace.

Those wishing to participate in "Ring for Unity" are asked to gather near the Campus Pond, located south of Lantz Gymnasium on Fourth Street, at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9. They will be given a blue bell (which they will be able to keep) and be positioned in a marked off area that contains the letters "E.I.U." At approximately 5 p.m., participants will be invited to ring their "unity bells" for two minutes, signifying their support and celebration of diversity at EIU and in the community of Charleston.

In case of rain, the event will take place inside Lantz Gym.

"Ring for Unity" was designed as a follow-up to "Hands Across EIU," held two

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years ago, said Keith Cosentino, student body president and member of EIUnity, event sponsor. At that event, participants joined hands, forming a line that connected the north part of campus with the south.

EIUnity is hoping for at least 2,000 participants for this 1999 event. The group is prepared to accommodate as many as 3,000 with bells, Cosentino said, noting that between 25 and 30 students representing various groups on campus worked together one night last week in order to tie ribbons on each of the bells.

"That was just a small example of the things we can accomplish by working together," Cosentino said. "And that's what EIUnity is all about."

During Thursday's bell ringing, an official group photo will be taken. Following the ceremony, free ice cream and raffles will be offered. Entertainment will be provided by the Daytimer Band.

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*****Note to Editors:** A limited number of photographers will be allowed on the top of nearby Stevenson Hall in order to photograph this event. Spots will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Vicki Woodard, media relations (581-7650), for details.

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